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Newsletter

JULY 6 1951

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

GRADUATE SCHOOL ★ USDA

July 25, 1951

To the Faculty, Committee Members and
others associated with the Graduate School:

GS lost a friend

in the death of I. Thomas McKillop (REA) in a plane crash, June 30. He greatly aided development of report work in GS and USDA. He had recently accepted the chairmanship of the new committee on general administration in the Department of Public Administration. A note written by Tom, in flight West, to E. W. Loveridge, chairman of the Department, shows the type of contributions he had been making to GS since he joined the faculty in 1946.

"Dear Earl," he wrote, "Sorry to go out of town before receipt and discussion of the proposals for a course in 'Controls' (The Planning and Control of Large Scale Operations). This like many other subjects is an important part of management. In general, it would seem to be a fine idea to add such a course to the list of offerings."

"There is but one question, which I would raise for discussion, and that is to what extent will the addition of courses divide classes below a proper level. While I realize it is an elastic affair. I would find it profitable to review the subject with you. My present plans will keep me out of town until the last week of July. If it is necessary to proceed - please recommend the course without awaiting my return."

The changing character of research,

which places more emphasis on teamwork, increases the potential usefulness of the older research worker, observes Josef Brozek in the June 1951 issue of THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY. Dr. Brozek goes on to say that, "Because of his (the older worker's) experience in research administration, planning, and evaluation, he may be increasingly useful even after his capacities for original and creative endeavor have begun to decline."

Ewan Clague, Labor, notes in a companion piece that data on the earnings of American men of science suggest...that by and large it is not before the sixties that professional ability and productive capacity begin to decline among highly trained scientists. For such people the maturity of judgment and the broad frame of reference that experience gives apparently outweigh the increasing inflexibility of advancing years.

Point IV assistance

is getting under way, says Douglas Ensminger. Within the past month OFAR has sent 11 technicians abroad to work on the program. Among these are entomologists to El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, a chemist to Guatemala, an agricultural engineer to Brazil, an agronomist to Peru, a forest pathologist to Liberia, extension specialists to India, and Lebanon, and two dairy specialists to Iran.

It won't be long now

until the 1951-52 catalog and the schedule of classes for the fall semester will be ready for distribution. That's where we need your help. We will be most grateful for your suggestions on how we can get word about new courses to students who will be interested in taking them. Perhaps when you look through the catalog, the schedule, or some of the flyers we are getting up for special courses, you'll think of groups in your agency that will be especially interested. Can they be reached through individual mailings, through announcements in house organs, professional journals? Give us a lead on this in July, or early August, if possible, and we'll follow through.

Among the students

in government jobs in Washington, this summer, are 97 men and women from 64 universities and colleges, who are taking part in the sixth annual Student Citizenship Seminar of the National Intercollegiate Christian Council.

Marguerite Gilstrap (BPISAE), a member of the local committee that helps make arrangements for the Seminar, tells me the purpose is not to recruit Government workers but to help the students understand the processes of Federal Government and to see the responsibilities of individual citizens in a democracy.

When President Truman spoke to the group during their orientation, he underscored the citizen's responsibility in the local precinct...the need to continue study of government throughout life.

The students get a look at the Federal process in their jobs as clerks and typists in 23 agencies (8 are in the USDA library). Then they hear domestic and foreign issues discussed by Government officials at policy level and by other Washington leaders in their dinner seminar meetings held 4 nights a week.

The mirror of student opinion

will be held up to all courses in GS this coming year. Student questionnaires have given such good results in evaluating new courses and the methods of new teachers that we plan to make wider use of them. On the recommendation of the GS Council we are setting them up for all classes.

We haven't decided whether to continue using the same questions. Your suggestions for changes will be appreciated on this. We have recently rearranged the questions so that a summary of the returns can be charted to show at a glance where changes in organization and presentation of subject matter are needed.

This move to re-examine our teaching methods and to set up a continuous review of all courses is in keeping with a general trend among colleges. Fred J. Kelly shows how widespread it has become in the June 1 issue of HIGHER EDUCATION. Twenty years ago, he says, there were only a few books on college teaching. Within the past 3 years 22 reports, many of these booklength, have been released. Dr. Kelly covers the list with a brief review of each book.

More on "sense of the meeting"

comes from Morris L. Cooke's article in the NEW YORK TIMES magazine, June 17. He says, "It would be false optimism to conclude that the sense of the meeting technique could be applied to the deliberations of major political bodies such as Congress in full session. Here the limitations of the method must be acknowledged. For by its very definition it requires not only utter frankness, sincerity, and mutual trust, but also a suppression of any personal, fractional, partisan, or section interests.

"Still there is a direct relationship between the Quaker practice and methods of securing agreements on disputes before the U. N. Assembly, once these disputes have been handed over to conciliation commissions or to mediators. Because it is possible for these commissions to operate in private, without the glare of press and radio publicity, and without the necessity for individual members of the commission to record their points of view, the way seems open for utilization of the Quaker practice.

"Strong words, provocative language, and repetitive discourse are taboo; members are encouraged to speak just once on a given point, and only after careful thought. And most significant, the individual speaks not simply as a man expressing his own conscience but as the voice of a group addressing itself to the issue at hand. If a contrary viewpoint is raised, it is considered as if it were one's own for the purpose of treating it objectively. 'Getting under the weight' of the other man's doubts is the term the Quakers sometimes use to describe this attitude of respect for a minority viewpoint."

The market for further education

for more than 1600 scientists and engineers employed in the Office of Naval Research has recently been thoroughly assessed. This was done in a series of studies made by the American Council of Education under contract with ONR. Men employed in the Bureau of Ordnance, Washington, and in the Philadelphia and New York Naval Shipyards took part in the project. Both the findings of this research and the procedures used to arrive at them have implications for GS.

A preliminary survey based on interviews with the men themselves and on supervisors' estimates of educational needs among their subordinates indicated that the scientists and engineers do not engage in a large number of activities to keep abreast of current development in their fields.

The supervisors emphasized the need for training that would lead to employee understanding of the total organization and the total process of a project from its inception to completion. Although they stressed practical courses dealing with daily problems, they also recognized needs for training in report writing, speech, and supervisory and administrative details.

Certificates of accomplishment

in administrative procedures have recently been issued to: Rufus E. Bareither, administrative assistant in the Geological Survey (Int.); Elmer D. Woodworth, investigator for the Bureau of Employment Compensation (FSA); and Max Chelofsky, clerk in the Food and Drug Administration (FSA).

ABOUT OURSELVES

"Our education as technical men

is unfortunately rather narrow-sided and in the nature of the circumstances in which we find ourselves, has probably become more so," Francis J. Curtis, vice president of the Monsanto Chemical Company, told the Commercial Chemical Development Association recently. He went on to say that he was talking only about education in school and college, and we have the whole of life to correct its defects.

He stressed an important part of the managerial development program---one which can best be carried out by the advisors is the encouragement of candidates to outside study, particularly beyond their field of specialization.

"Some knowledge of economics, psychology, marketing, finance, and accounting is almost obligatory for a man with scientific and engineering backgrounds, since due to the exacting nature of their subjects, there has been little opportunity to browse in distant fields. Certainly a knowledge of history, philosophy, languages, and literature will make a broader man, a more understanding one and, therefore, a better manager. Not all of this study need be in formal classes; much of it can be obtained by reading and discussion. Few towns and cities are devoid of various kinds of discussion groups where the reactions of different types of minds can whet the appetite to know more."

If you'd like to read the entire article, you will find it in the May 14, 1951 issue of CHEMICAL AND ENGINEERING NEWS.

Enrollment is up,

this summer, about 42 percent over that of last year. This is a marked change over fall and spring enrollments, which were down from 15 to 20 percent. It appears that increased enrollment is the result of new employees in Government.

GS people in the news

Sherman Johnson heads the USDA committee named by Secretary Brannan to work with representatives of the land-grant colleges in analyzing this country's agricultural productive capacity.

V. Webster Johnson has transferred to ECA to head up work in connection with land grant reform programs throughout the world.

C. R. (Cap) Arnold retired as Production Credit Commissioner in FCA, June 30. Among the many expressions of commendation he received from colleagues and friends was a nice letter from President Truman.

Mary Rokahr received a distinguish service award at the June commencement program of her alma mater, the University of Nebraska.

Duncan Hall is spending the summer at his home in England. A. J. Jaffe is in Paris, France.

Sincerely,



Director